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THE
CHRISTIAN'S MINIATURE:
A PICTURE
OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY
R. K. SEWALL.

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DESIGN OF THE WORK.

It has seemed to the author a desideratum to have a brief outline—a miniature of the Christian life, in which the several stages in the process of its development should be described. This idea he has attempted to realize in this volume. Though the portraiture be deficient in many of its features, yet it is believed the most prominent and essential are embraced.

Conscious of the imperfect execution of the task, yet, if it shall assist the Christian to a view of himself, and in the work of self-examination, the author will feel himself rewarded.

460017

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAP. I. Christian's Natural State,	5
II. Christian's Developing State — under conviction,	13
III. Christian's Developing State — in Process of Conversion,	23
IV. Christian Developed,	33
V. } Christian Endowed { with Faith,	41
VI. } { with Hope,	48
VII. Christian's Relation to the World,	58
VIII. Christian's Conquest,	69
IX. Christian's State of Glorification,	83

THE CHRISTIAN'S MINIATURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS NATURAL STATE.

WHO, as he looks on the rude and shapeless pile of granite—or the blocks of marble, by the bench of the statuary, would conceive of the figure and likeness of the man hid under the rough exterior? But by the power of genius, the strokes and delicate finishings of the sculptor's chisel lay bare, first the obscure outlines, then the image, and finally, the naked man, in all his symmetry of parts, in all the delicacy and beauty of form and feature, the cold countenance often being lighted up with a glow of intelligence, the marble—the stone—the block being made almost to speak! Now, what the man is in the block of marble, the Christian is in his

native state. There is the mass, crude, misshapen, formless.

The God-likeness, originally enstamped, is defaced and overgrown with the moss of earth. The image is lost. But it may be restored by the skill and power of a master spirit. The Christian, in all the symmetry, beauty, purity and spirituality of high and holy character, under the hand of the spirit of God, is developed from a moral mass of sense and sin, which constitutes the natural man.

The deformity, natural and moral grossness of man, in his carnal state, is *unbelief*. *Unbelief* is the marble and the granite which encase the carnal heart, the unhewn, cumbersome exterior, which envelops the Christian. This is the natural state of mankind, the great evil of which is, the *atheism*, the practical *atheism* it involves. Therefore, *naturally, man is without God* in the world. He lives—he acts—he plans and executes as though God did not exist. He hates the knowledge of God, and does not choose the fear of the Lord. The consequences are legitimate. On account of unbelief man is

condemned on charge of a capital offence against God. "He that believeth not is condemned already."

In his natural state, man acts as though he were conscious of being under such condemnation. Thoughts of death, judgment and eternity, are sources of disquietude. Hence, men in a state of unbelief, strive to divert their thoughts from themselves, as accountable creatures; and they desire not "to have God in all their thoughts." Hence unbelieving men shrink from the truth as God has revealed it—they dare not meet it face to face—they cannot meet it frankly and not tremble. Therefore, when exposed to the clear light and power of truth, man in his natural state, (if he be not hardened in sin,) will attempt to bribe conscience, and darken reason; and wrapped about and shielded with a web of sophisms, he stands forth, the champion of error. Behold the felon! He is convicted of crime for which he is condemned to atone on the gallows. Every hour is full of melancholy forboding. Every moment is crowded with bitterness. Every foot-step—every clank of bolt, bar or chain, are ominous of

evil. The thought of his guilt and condemnation haunts him in his solitude ; and therefore, he endeavors so to fill up each moment, that he may forget himself, and his end.

And it is the same with man in a state of unbelief. His condition and that of the felon are very like.

The unbeliever is disquieted at any exhibition of the greatness, and power, and justice of God. The general fear of death, springs, mostly from a consciousness of guilt and condemnation before God. What comes after death, is an object of dread. There are indescribable apprehensions of real danger, in the dark valley and shadow. It is a view, however indistinct, of inexorable justice, the distant gleaming of whose sword, flashes in the face of the unbeliever across the dark valley : and whose frown hangs over the gates of the grave ! Death "is the king of terrors," because he is a minister of justice. The condition of pardon, in order to salvation, implies that man in a state of unbelief, is already condemned. Man may be forgiven—he may be acquitted, but he cannot be pardoned if he be not condemned.

Then, all who need pardon—all to whom pardon is offered in the Gospel, must be in a state of condemnation. They must be lost to law and justice, before executive clemency can open a door of salvation. God speaks to, and treats with the unbeliever as with one condemned. Therefore he has made provision, and opened a way for the escape of unbelievers, through pardon. So then, the real condition of unbelieving men, is that of the prisoner, who has been arraigned, found guilty, is sentenced, and now awaits the hour of execution!

Such is the natural state of the Christian.

He is in a state of unmitigated guilt. Unbelief is a sin of peculiar enormity, not only on account of its practical atheism, but because of the consequences in which it involves its subjects. In all judicial proceedings, justice seizes quickly, on those whose offences are marked by peculiar atrocity, and obvious guilt. There is no debate with the jury; no hesitancy with the judge. Condemnation follows hard upon conviction. This is precisely the state of the unbeliever's cause at the tribunal of the judge of quick

and dead. For his unbelief man is condemned already.

In his natural state, the Christian is in great peril. Though the guilt of no other sin lies at the door, unbelief itself, is sufficiently enormous to decide the question of his eternal destiny. When man is weighed in the balances, with his works, unbelief will turn the scale of justice.

The condition of an unbeliever, is legally and justly sealed. Sentence of condemnation is pronounced; and the unbeliever only lives waiting the hour of its execution. On the past, it is written—hopeless. On the dark front of the future, glows the fiery sentence—"he that believeth not is condemned already!" Unbelief meets man in his natural state at every turn, and shuts in his face every door of hope!

Hence, we perceive the absolute necessity of pardon as a condition of salvation; and also, the necessity of repentance, as a condition of pardon.

The only safe and honorable way of escape for the condemned, is through pardon. This is a lawful method of escape. In the nature

and constitution of government, pardon is the natural means of relief to the condemned—it is the natural door of hope, to all, who are lost to law and justice.

So, the natural state of the Christian, is one of unbelief, or practical atheism. It involves enormous guilt. It incurs all the risque of impending sentence of law, which hangs over him, burdened with the “wrath to come.” Justice guards with a flaming sword, which turns every way to cut off escape, while pardon, on account, and in virtue of the merits of Jesus, has bridged a passage to hope and heaven! Let man pass here, and all is safe. Let him refuse—delay a little longer, and all is lost for ever!

The reason why the Christian in his natural state is not cut off at once, together with all who are in this condition, is, *because God waits on man to be gracious.* Sentence awaits its execution. Life, is the pardoning period of human existence. Justice, at the solicitation of mercy, lingers on the track of the guilty, and condemned through the day of grace, that opportunity may be given for the overtures of mercy to be complied with.

In the meanwhile, Heaven, Earth and Hell, are moved to save, being emptied of their motives to hedge up his course, and turn the condemned into the way of life and pardon.

Such is the natural condition and exposure of the Christian, viewed in his carnal state. Burdened with the guilt of unbelief, he stands condemned to suffer the penalty of violated law. He is in a state of treason against the Sovereign of the Universe. The wrath of God abides on him. He must perish, or be rescued from the bonds of sin, and the hands of the executioner, through pardon. Hence, by nature, the Christian is a child of wrath even as others.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS DEVELOPING STATE.

THIS state is complex, — consisting of two stages — conviction and conversion. I propose to consider it in the order of its successive stages, as a process.

The difference between this, and man's natural state, consists, *in a lively knowledge of one's true condition as an unbeliever.* Whereas he was once blind, he now sees. He sees himself to be guilty and lost. His eye affects his heart. He trembles in view of his peril. He is oppressed with a sense of his sin, which, like a burden of lead, bears down on his heart and conscience.

His condition is no worse, — his guilt and danger are no greater, — his sentence is no heavier now, than before. But the scales have fallen from his eyes. He has become sensible of his state and condition. Here, is the precise point of contrast, between the

christian in his natural, and in his developing state. This contrast is technically expressed by the term *conviction*.

Conviction, embraces not only a just apprehension—a *true sense* of one's carnal state, but also, a lively regret,—*deep penitence*, for the guilt incurred.

The head and the heart, are touched by the arrows of conviction. Light and pain follow in their course, which result in the product of a peculiar *disposition*. So the disposition of mind preparatory to conversion, (or that change of state and relations, which constitutes the christian,) is the natural effect of the process of conviction. This disposition develops itself in the christian, (while in the state of an awakened, anxious sinner,) *as subdued*. In the natural, carnal state, the mind and heart, in their temper, are unsubdued.

“The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.”

Man universally, in his natural state, lives as though he were independent of God. He lives without God in the world.

On the one *hand*, he stoops not to ask even the supply of his necessary breath, and the elements of health; nor on the other, does he render thanks for what has been received. Confiding in himself and the wisdom of his own plans, jealous of his right to himself and service — impatient of the restraint of that divine law, which is obnoxious to the clamors of appetite and the demands of lust — man naturally and generally, does not recognize the authority of his Creator, nor yield the tribute of obedience which is his due.

When God has drawn the curtains of night, and lighted up the heavens for his convenience, how few send up their evening oblation?

When the day-star kindles in the east the light of morning, how few think to pay their morning vows? When earth, air, and sea, forest, and rill, mingle their praises; — when nature's self speaks forth glad hosannas, the voice of carnal man alone is silent.

But the gush of godly sorrow in the heart, stricken with a sense of sin, breaks down the will, and sweeps away its perverseness.

No man, in this condition can forget God, when he has met him in the way — whose majesty has made him afraid — whose terrors have seized upon him. There is no longer confidence in his own might and wisdom. “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God.” When this pride is broken, indifference, carnal security, can no longer find a lodgment in the mind. Sensible of the evil of his condition, penetrated with a view of his ingratitude, “going and weeping,” they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.—Jeremiah v. 5.

Such is the evidence of a subdued disposition, which constitutes that “*broken-heartedness*” essential to contrition. The will, the desires, the affections, and the thoughts, are thus broken to law, and are reduced to the authority of the Gospel.

Tears and sadness, desire and effort to return to God, indicate a state of submission which is induced by the special power of the spirit of God, put forth to break down the natural temper of man's perverse will.

The instrument by which conviction is

wrought in the heart, is the *Law of God*. It is the law-work in the soul, which creates a sense of sin.

As our schoolmaster, the law teaches and subdues the heart, — drives man out of himself unto Christ, "Who is the end of the law for righteousness to him that believeth."

Another feature of this disposition is *humility*. This is the permanent effect of brokenness of heart, or that subdued state, in which, the work of conviction develops itself. It is a most attractive element of character. It implies a just apprehension of one's true relation to God and his fellow man. A suitable sense of dependence on God, is however, its prevailing feature. A becoming distrust of self, begets willingness to be taught — a disposition to be directed. It prepares the way to be led by the spirit and counsel of God.

Therefore, the mind truly convicted of sin, instead of a self-justifying spirit, humbly "asks the way to Zion."

Man, while in the state of an anxious sinner, lies not down in supine inactiv-

ity, presuming to console himself with the reflection, "if I am to be saved, I shall be saved, let me live as I list."

No. His ill-desert seems so great he feels willing to be led. "What must I do to be saved?" is the absorbing question with him.

If it can be answered satisfactorily, the heart's desire will be gratified;—the mind will be at ease. Man is no longer ashamed to have it known, that the salvation of his soul is the great object of his concern. He makes no secret of the fact, that he is seeking the pardon of his sins. Interested to secure to himself every help, he seeks it at the hand of God, and at the hand of man.

The Bible—the closet—the pastor's study, will be visited; and the important errand to each will be—"how shall I be saved?"

Earnestness, is another development in the disposition of the convicted soul.

The effort of genuine penitence, will exert itself in a hearty desire to be freed from the dominion of sin. Sin lies heavily

at the heart, and the sense of its guilt, strikes the soul to the very quick, as with a sting.

No desire can well be stronger, than that which moves the heart of the anxious sinner. Sin becomes his loathing and abhorrence, as a deadly-hateful thing. There is — there can be no peace of conscience, till the sense of this burden of moral disease which fills the soul with aches and pains, be removed. Perhaps no effort is so intense, and requires more perseverance, than that of turning from sin and forsaking it.

In this effort, the earnestness betrays itself, in the eye, the voice, and the very aspect of the man. It is so great as to absorb all other things. The overwhelming thought is — “I am lost — lost, perishing.” — “How shall I be saved?” Who can help? Where is it to be found? Whither. O whither shall I flee from this troubled breast? And when the hope of the possibility of relief begins to dawn, it is seized with desire. Every power is taxed — every nerve is stretched — every energy is put in requisition.

Man must strive to enter into life — many will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

The earnestness of the anxious sinner to escape from the wrath to come, is exhibited in an effort, by which he strives to secure the boon of pardon at the hands of God.

Resolution and determination, are further developments in the disposition of the convicted.

Subdued, under a heart, broken for sin — humbled under a sense of guiltiness in the sight of God — earnest to be freed from the power and dominion of sin, — the anxious sinner, is resolved on escape. He lingers not to become more swift of foot, or better fitted for his flight, but, he “hastes to Zion, as well as asks the way.”

Until man has determined, that he will now begin the work of his salvation, he has absolutely done nothing.

Until the anxious sinner is determined in his own mind on obtaining religion, it is absolutely certain he will do nothing. He will perish in his sins. He must resolve in the strength of the Lord, and carry the resolution into effect.

Man does nothing, before he resolves, or

determines on doing it. Determination is the ground of efficient action in securing any interest, in accomplishing any purpose. He who is awakened at night by the cry of fire under his window, may stand doubting whether to flee by seeking the door, or by leaping from the window.

His irresolution increases his peril. Not being determined, he hesitates. But let the flames curl about his lodging place—the roar of which, combined with the crash of falling timbers, bursts suddenly on his ear,—and he will leap for his life. He will no longer hesitate about the way, but will be concerned only to escape. The very necessity of his condition will be his salvation. So is it with the anxious sinner truly convicted of his guilt. The sense of his guilt and danger, awakens his fears, and excites him to escape for his life; and letting go every hold, he drops, and is received into the arms of Jesus, “who is mighty to save!”

The convicted sinner, when he begins to experience in his heart the throbbings of real penitence, in the light which is shed upon his way—with his eyes now open to

see his true condition, beholds an open door before him, which no man can shut. He enters here through the only way of escape, which "is Christ;" "who is the way, the truth and the life." With joy he runs the race set before him, and is not weary; he walks, but does not faint. He finds it just what he needs; the highway to pardon and peace in believing!

If he returns to the city of his carnal state, death is in the city. If he stops by the way, or remains where he now is, he must perish. He can but perish if he advances. Hope dawns before him, but darkness gathers behind. Hence his resolution is stimulated to the utmost—his determination is fixed.

Such is the disposition of genuine penitence, as exhibited in all those, who truly seek to return unto the Lord, who are described in the Bible "as asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, come, let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten."

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN'S DEVELOPING STATE.

WE shall now consider the Christian in that stage of development called conversion.

The disposition described as the product of conviction, lays the foundation of the process, by which, conversion perfects the work of Christian relationship.

By this process a return to God is effected; and in the act of return, man becomes united to God as the branch is united to the vine through faith on his son;—and thus man becomes a real child of God—a true Christian.

The Christian's natural state, is one of alienation from God. His return is effected by an alliance with God, in the hearty and faithful execution of his duties as a subject.

When subjects, in a state of revolt, return to their duty, they bind themselves to the person, interests, and government of their sovereign. Religion—as the word signifies,—binds man to the person, interests and government of his Maker. This is its object.

This is its result on those who embrace it. The instrument by which religion binds—is a covenant.

Those mourners who “asked the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward,” proposed to join themselves unto the Lord “in a perpetual covenant.” I apprehend these were convicted sinners who were seeking Religion, and by its bonds, an union with the Lord.

Now, this is just the process by which the Christian passes out of a state of anxiety and sorrow, into one of hope and peace in believing. The act of return to the Lord, is consummated, by an agreement, bargain or covenant of perpetual obligation. This transaction involves conditions and obligations, founded in the mutual consent of the parties. This process,—so well understood among men—so constantly in practice—so simple, and yet so effectual.—God, in condescension to our state, has adopted as the method of return, by which, the sinner may secure his favor. The disposition already described as the product of the convicting agency of the Holy Spirit, is the basis of the anxious sinner's efforts to seek an union with his

God. He who has promised and fulfilled—who has bought and sold, possesses practical knowledge of the nature of this important transaction. This covenant by which man is holden in the bonds of religion,—by which he is transferred from himself to his Creator, and is constituted a Christian—is a *spiritual transaction*.

“God is a spirit. He seeketh such to worship him as will worship him in spirit and truth.” Therefore, the soul, the essential, immortal, invisible self, must execute the act, which God can recognize as the legitimate act of the man. It is with the mind—the conscious self, God has to do.

The body and its organs are but instruments, and are no more parts of the essential nature of the soul, or necessary to its existence and action, than the telescope is a part of the eye, or necessary to the existence of the astronomer.

God listens to the language of the thoughts; the silent, secret breathings of the heart, he hears, while the loudest vociferations of zeal are lost in sound, or returned in the answers of echo.

The soul, the whole soul, as it goes forth, on the swellings of a full tide of deep desire to meet and hold communion with its God, alone can expect to find audience. Thus if man approaches unto God, and desires union with him in a covenant transaction, the act is a spiritual act,—the spirit of God and the spirit of man being the contracting parties.

This transaction is of the nature of a contract to which two parties are necessary. Such is the fact in this transaction. Stipulated duties, conditions, promises and obligations, are implied. Such are the facts in the transaction under consideration. Every Christian is conscious of it. The church itself, embracing the whole body of Christians, is constituted by an act of the nature of a bargain with God. Every visible member of Christ's church, is so constituted, by a public transaction of the nature of a bargain.

By an act of the same nature, does man become Christ's. He is bought by the blood of Christ. There must then have been a bargain, to which, man himself, as well as his Maker, was a party.

Such is the basis, both of the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace. The conditions of this great bargain, are simple, though the difference between the contracting parties is infinite. The parties are, Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, on the one hand, and the anxious sinner on the other; the creature and the Creator—the Sovereign and the subject.

The rebellion of the subject has occasioned the displeasure of the Sovereign. The reconciliation of the Sovereign with the subject, and the return of the subject to *his duty*, can in no way profit the Sovereign. It will not add to his excellence, or glory or happiness, and angels and archangels will be as ready to love and obey,—and the halleluiahs of Heaven will be as loud and long,—if the subject be not reconciled.

But the return of the sinner to his service as a subject of Jehovah's government, is not only his duty, but his privilege, and for his interest. All the advantage is on the sinner's side. Therefore the sinner cannot enter on equal terms, into that transaction with his God, by which he is adopted into the family

of God, and becomes a Christian. God will forever be as essentially holy, just and good, if the sinner perishes in his sins, as he would if the sinner should repent, believe, and be saved. Besides, the Christian in the condition of an unbeliever, is guilty and condemned, on the charge of treason against God—a capital offence in the court above.

He has nothing to plead in extenuation of his guilt, as it is written, “every mouth shall be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God.”

No future fidelity can retrieve the guilt and mischief of the past. He who keeps the law of God to the very letter, merits nothing. He has done his duty merely. But in all points, man comes short; and he who fails in the least, is guilty of all. Such is the unequal condition of the parties. Hence the necessity of a Mediator—a days-man—who shall take the place of the sinner, and become his surety to God.

The stipulations in this bargain (by which man acquires an interest in the Christian's inheritance) are on his part, love, service and

obedience ; and on the part of God, they are *pardon and life everlasting.*

But, in executing his part of the bargain, man falls short of the legal requirements of the contract. His past forfeiture—his present short comings, create a deficiency, both in merit and ability, to meet the demands of justice. This deficiency must be cancelled. In the covenant of redemption, this exigency has been provided for. Help has been laid on one mighty to save, who stands in the sinner's place to God, and in the place of God, to the sinner, in whom meet infinite merit and infinite power. His resources are adequate to the wants of the greatest sinner.

Christ is the Mediator between God and man ; and has become the sinner's surety unto God ; while in Christ, " God is reconciling the world unto himself."

Of Christ, God spake by the mouth of his holy prophet, saying, " I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and given thee for a covenant of the people."—Isaiah 42: 6.

Therefore, in that transaction, by which the anxious sinner unites himself unto God, Christ stands as the surety of the sinner ; and

is entitled to the honor and glory of his salvation, as the representative of his eternal interests, and is at once the argument and the advocate of his claim to favor, in the court of Heaven! The sinner returns to his duty, and joins himself to God, by giving himself up to God, in a formal and solemn contract, engaging to glorify him in his body and soul, by his life and service, trusting in the merit of Christ Jesus, for commendation to the favor of God. The consequences of this act, are such, that all obstacles to pardon are removed. In the surrender of himself by covenant to God, the sentence of death is suspended, pardon is granted, and the sinner is enlarged under the seal of redemption at the hands of his God.

Of all this he is conscious. Hope now rises in his prospect, in which, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and all the peace and joy which can spring from such a change and such facts, pour at once into his soul a fullness of consolation indescribable.

Thus he becomes the Lord's. Hence a bargain, involving love, obedience and service on the one hand, and reward on the

other—(not as the sinner's due, but as a favor) consummates that transaction, by which man unites himself with the interest and government and glory of God—by which, he becomes a Christian.

This is to be a perpetual "covenant never to be forgotten." It is not for a week, a month, or a year, that man bargains self and service unto the Lord. It is for time and for eternity. No man can assume the Christian estate, and be released from the obligations of a Christian life. From his covenant vows he can never go back. His obligations will co-exist with his being. His vows will meet him at death, and at the judgment seat of Christ! God will not forget this covenant. Then, let the Christian, and he who aspires to Christian estate and privileges, remember that he is under bonds to God, "to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly before his God."

Such is the bundle of life eternal. Its cords like cords of love, bind with tender firmness the creature with his Creator, in a tie death cannot sever! Nevertheless, they are the bonds of a man. They are the bonds of

choice, promise, and duty. They bind with the force of a contract.

Then let the sin-stricken, anxious, inquiring sinner, break at once his agreement with death, and execute that act, in which he shall become the Lord's. Blood-bought as he is, let him close in with the overtures of mercy—strike hands with his God—engage himself unto Jesus, and live and die in the bonds of faith. Reader, have you negotiated this great bargain with your God? Have you thus become a Christian? “My son, give me thine heart?” Have you accepted the invitation? Slight it no longer. Close in with mercy—give up yourself, your hopes, your prospects, unto God, in a covenant never to be forgotten. So shall you become Christ's.

Thus have I endeavored to exhibit the disposition of the Christian while under the workings of the spirit and law of God in conviction, and the process—in that great transaction, by which he passes from death unto life. He that runneth may read, and the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN DEVELOPED.

HAVING looked at the Christian in his natural state, and traced him through his developing process, while emerging from darkness into light, we shall now consider him in his renewed state, and if possible, we shall exhibit, the new phase in his condition and character, so that every eye may catch an image of the reflection. Though the outline be obscure, yet it shall be true to nature.

As developed in his relations and character, man as a Christian, is a "*new creature*." This is the product of his converting change.

The secret of godliness, is a great mystery—as it is written, "great is the mystery of godliness." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." *To be in Christ*, is to be formed into his likeness, to be interested in his virtue, to be robed in his righteousness, to be united to him as the branch is united

to the vine—bound up with him in the bundle of life. In fine, it implies such a change in the nature and relations of man, as constitutes the Christian.

The change is virtually a new creation. Man is in need of moral renovation, to enjoy vigorous spiritual health. His natural state is one of moral death, which is developed in physical infirmity and decay. The first vital effort inhales the deadly atmosphere, and every pulsation urges the tainted tide from the centre to the circumference of the human system. "In Adam all have died." By him sin entered into the world, and death by sin. "So death hath passed on all men, in that all have sinned." The fact that all men, in some real, proper and important sense are dead, is clearly asserted in the bible. Then, the essential element of spiritual life, is extinct in man.

But if any man be in Christ "he hath life;" and this element of Christian life, is said "to be hid with Christ in God."

Then the Christian element of character, is essentially, a *vital principle*. The Bible designates it as *life*. It describes its effects

as vivifying ; and the eternal life of the Christian, will be but the full expansion of this element, in that more perfect and congenial state, which lies beyond the grave.

Now, in ordinary circumstances, a vital principle is developed, only in connexion with a new creation. Indeed the very existence of a vital principle, involves a new creation, either, in the ordinary process of production and reproduction within the circle of nature's power, or, in an effort of miraculous power.

Light is the product of the solar ray. Motion is the natural product of disturbed forces. So the vital principle is the natural product of a *new creation*, in the vegetable, the animal, and the spiritual kingdoms.

If man be spiritually dead—dead in any proper and important sense, it is obvious, a principle, or element of life, must be introduced, and infuse vitality into the heart of the spiritual constitution, ere the kindlings of life can animate the soul. But, this is that regenerating change, which creates man “to *newness of life*,” and is wrought in the spirit and temper of his mind ; and such a change

must ensue, or the soul, "dead in trespasses and sins," can never experience the throbbings of spiritual life, or enjoy the prospect of eternal life !

This change is wrought, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." It cannot, from the very nature of the case, be the product of any natural pre-existing cause in the constitution of man's moral or spiritual nature. Nor is it the growth of any seed, or germ of holiness in the heart of man naturally. Nor is it the product of any process of education merely. Therefore, in a mysterious manner, and by a supernatural agency, a spiritual change, is wrought in man in the progress of his christian experience. This change is not a mere external reformation. It is not apparent only, but it is a real internal change. The rudiments of a two-fold existence, wrapped the one within the other, exist in the nature of man. The grosser is physical, which acts through a medium of sense ; the nobler and most essential is spiritual, which acts through the medium of faith. The organization of the former, adapts the creature to his present

mode of existence ; the latter is adapted to a higher, future, and more perfect state.

The one is frail, mortal and transitory ; the other is immortal. This is *the inner man*. Here the alleged change is wrought. In him who has passed such a change, external appearances, physiological peculiarities remain. The features are the same. The eye, the ear, the voice, the whole outer man, are as they were.

Nevertheless, a change is apparent. We see it, we hear it, we feel it. It shows itself through the man, and is so great, peculiar and glorious, that it places him in contrast with his former self.

In the renovating change, the current and character of the spiritual exercises, are diverted into a new channel.

But spiritual exercises are developed in the thoughts, words and actions. Therefore, the change exhibited in the daily walk and conversation of the Christian, is but the external development of a corresponding change in his spiritual state.

The facts which are the representatives of this change, are such, "that things once

hated, are now loved ; and things once loved, are now hated." The fear of God which springs from, and has its source in filial love, now controls the heart and life. Man under this change is pressed by new wants—excited by new desires. "He hungers and thirsts after righteousness." He loaths and abhors sin, and himself, on account of sin. Urged by new motives, he enters on a new course, of life and conduct. In the change, holiness, a new and foreign element of character is introduced, which is a principle of spiritual life, that gradually unfolds the christian character and assimilates it to that of the just made perfect.

The spiritual system consists of the union of several functions, which concur in the product of moral action. They may be arranged under the intellectual powers—the affections and the will. The affections hold a central position ; and are denominated the *heart*, in scriptural phraseology.

Originally the *heart* beat with love to God. Now, it is a source of hatred to God and supreme love for self.

Originally, it poured a tide of life through-

out the spiritual system, which warmed every emotion, excited desire, and kindled thought to a glow of holy and fervid communion with God.

But a disastrous change has come over our race—a sad catastrophe has befallen human nature! “The heart is now deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” “Out of it proceed thefts, murders, adulteries, evil thoughts and all uncleanness.”

Here nestle the evil passions. Here is hatched every diabolical purpose. Then a change of heart is absolutely necessary. Now in regeneration, a change is wrought, and the affections are the seat of this change, and first indicate it. Love becomes the controlling power; and benevolence, like a clear, deep and well defined vein, runs through the character. So the heart in the true Christian, is changed from sin to holiness, and it becomes the source of those correcting influences, which develop, perfect, and beautify, the Christian character.

“Whatever things are pure and lovely and of good report,” are desired; while impurity and unholiness are abhorred. For the affec-

tions of a renewed heart flow in a channel of holy desire and emotion.

Thus is holiness planted in the heart by the spirit of God. It grows with the Christian's growth, and ripens with his age. Faith and good works are its fruits here in the flesh on earth; and in the world to come, life everlasting. How choice the fruit! how rich the harvest! Who will not sow that he may reap hereafter?

Such is the nature of that change, through which man passes to the Christian estate, and by which he becomes a new creature.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN ENDOWED.

THERE are two endowments with which the christian is invested, and which distinguish him in his renewed character.

The former is the source of the difference between the christian and the wordling, and constitutes the wall of separation, between "the clean and the unclean — the holy and the unholy;" and the other, is the source of the believer's joy. The one invests him with righteousness — the other, with peace in believing. The one *is faith*, and the other *is hope*.

The act of believing in Christ, is the substantial element of christian faith. The end of faith is the salvation of the soul; — "and without faith, it is impossible to please God." Then, faith, is in some important sense, connected with human salvation. Now, the righteous are those, and those only, who

"shall enter into life eternal." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but, *the righteous into life eternal*," said Christ, in his description of the concluding scene of the general judgment. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Only in righteousness, can man behold the face and stand with acceptance in the presence of his Maker. Then, the necessity of personal or imputed righteousness, (that righteousness of which holiness is the essential element,) is obvious. But, man is naturally destitute of righteousness. The "sweet singer of Israel," exclaimed in view of this fact — "behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me!" As it was with the Psalmist, so is it with all other men in their natural state. "There is none righteous, no not one." Such is God's estimate of man's moral condition.

Now, man is utterly unable to meet this deficiency, in his moral qualifications for Heaven. He cannot clothe himself in righteousness. Self-righteousness will no more cover the nakedness of his soul, than filthy rags would hide and protect his naked body.

And though man has sought out many inventions — “has hewn out to himself cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water” — as he stands looking wishfully therein, expecting to purge away his uncleanness; — in his own blood and tears, and toil, to wash his robe and make it white — God meets him in the way, saying, “though thou wash thee with nitre and take the much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me saith the Lord.” Jer. 2, 22 v.

Therefore, righteousness must become the possession of all who shall be saved, or entitled to regard as Christians.

Law is the natural source of righteousness; its righteousness is rendered available through obedience. But Christ is the gracious source of righteousness, which, as a gift, becomes available through faith as its medium.

That, faith, is connected with righteousness as a medium, the Bible renders obvious. Abel, Noah, Abraham and the Patriarchs, were righteous before God; but their righteousness was of faith. Indeed, “with the heart man believeth unto righteous-

ness.' Rom. 10, 10 v. Faith is urged in the Bible, as a condition of salvation, because, it is a medium of righteousness. Faith opens a channel of righteousness, full, free, abounding, which, in all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in the person of Christ, and like the rill from its fountain head, leaped in living streams from his wounded hands and pierced side, as he hung on the cross !

Faith is appropriative. In believing a dogma, a fact, or an opinion of others, we, in a true, proper and practical sense, make it our own, for our use and advantage. Then he who believes in Christ, as his substitute to God for virtue — as his surety to God for fidelity in service — as the centre and circumference of his hope of favor with God — makes the righteousness of Christ his own, — so far as is necessary to his acceptance with God. From the very nature of the relation of faith, the righteousness of which it is the medium, is just such righteousness as will be acceptable with God. He must regard with infinite complacency, his own excellence. But the righteousness of which faith

is a medium, is the righteousness of God in Christ; and it is this, which becomes available unto salvation.

“For God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Cor. 5, 21 v.

Thus does the christian appear righteous before God. He shines in the lustre of borrowed beams. He is clothed with righteousness not his own, as with a garment. It is “a robe washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.” Thus arrayed, the christian is fitted to stand in the presence of God and the Lamb, without spot and blameless, and to mingle in the society of the “spirits of just men made perfect.” Thus arrayed in the vesture of Christ, redeemed sinners will fill the orchestra on high, and sing on the celestial heights and along the banks of the river of life, and through the streets of the golden city, “that new song—worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” So the christian is endowed with faith that he may become possessed of the righteousness

of Christ, and share an inheritance with the saints.

The mendicant who walks our streets, soliciting his bread at the hand of charity — who would be spurned from the very door-stool of a bank — in the name, and with the check of a friend who has money deposited in its vaults, may stand at its counter, and despite his rags and haggard looks, draw forth silver and gold for the supply of all necessities.

Faith is to man, what the bank check would be to the beggar.

Christ is the sinner's friend. He has provided a deposit of righteousness sufficient for life and salvation. With faith, poor, blind, naked, and destitute as he is in a spiritual sense, the sinner may present himself in the name of Jesus at the very door of Heaven, and draw on its righteousness for the supply of every spiritual necessity.

Thus Christ is accomplishing human salvation, by fitting man for the presence of his Maker and the society of Heaven — clothing the christian in his own righteousness — purifying to himself, in this way, "a peculiar

people," and reconciling those who were enemies by wicked works, that he may present them unto God, "holy, unblamable and irreproachable in his sight." Colos. 1, 22 v.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN AS ENDOWED WITH HOPE.

THE endowment of faith has relation to the christian's moral condition ; but hope contemplates his present and future blessedness. Hope is the bow of promise to the christian life, within the circle of whose influence, though often enveloped in clouds and darkness, life is charmed. Hope consists in the union of desire and expectation. The act of such a union, is the source of the existence of hope in a philosophical point of view. Christian hope, is, then, the union of christian desire and expectation.

It is the natural desire, and the earnest expectation of man, that there is for him, *a life beyond the grave*. We are conscious of the springing of an immortal something within — a germ of that life to be.

The flower, which is reared in some dark

recess, turns instinctively, and stretches itself in the direction of the straggling sunlight, to drink in health and verdure. So the germ of immortality within man, stretches itself in thought, desire and expectation, onward and upward, to the light and purity of a more perfect state.

For whatever be the condition of our species, they look beyond the bounds of time with deep solicitude ; and though a dense and cheerless mist rises before the spiritual vision, and shades the prospect, yet, there are traceable the outlines of a future state. There is a land — there are shores washed by an eternal sea ; and now and then, a shadow sweeps over earth, — an echo reaches mortal ear ! Here lies that " world to come," so often spoken of by Christ — where man is to fill up the measure of his being, after a brief, preparatory sojourn here on earth, in the flesh.

Connected with these facts are high interests ; — interests co-extensive with the work of the soul — interests, which involve all an immortal being can hope — all he has reason to fear.

Now, concern is the mother of hope. Then, whoever has religious desires and expectations, and is concerned for the interests involved therein, cherishes hope concerning them.

The Bible speaks of genuine and spurious hopes. A genuine hope is described under the figure of an anchor; and the hope of the hypocrite, as a "spider's web." The former, is sure and steadfast; the latter, is a net, with which souls are caught and entangled for their ruin.

The drowning man, it is said, will catch at a straw; so, the sinner, is liable to mistake when he feels himself sinking in the troubled deep of sin, and will grasp at a shadow, and cling to it with all the tenacity of despair!

A man with a sore conscience seeks ease, rather than soundness and healing. Comfort or happiness, at this day, is the motive with many in seeking religion. It is for its consolations, rather than its duties, there is reason to fear, that many desire religion. Therefore, multitudes in all probability, in their hot haste to escape the edge of the sword of the spirit, and get out of its

reach, run into the church, having seized only the cloak of Religion; and hence we perceive, that many have a form of godliness, but none of its power, — a name to live while they are dead.

But genuineness or fraud, is indicated by certain peculiarities; and often, one well defined characteristic is sufficient to settle the question.

Now, a genuine hope has a distinguishing peculiarity — a marked characteristic. The reason, which lies at the foundation of a genuine hope — its peculiarity — its distinguishing feature, is *the effect of its influence*. “He that hath this hope purifyeth himself.” Then, the purifying influence of the hope, on the mind, heart and life of him who cherishes it, is its distinguishing feature.

The influence of a genuine christian hope, is, in its nature and design, purifying.

Purity is a rare and distinguished attainment; and is of great value in the estimation of Jehovah. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

One main object with Jesus, in the great work of mediation, was, “that he might

purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." The whole system of the machinery of grace, was adapted and operates to effect this one design. The presence of God, will be a source of the greatest joy to any pure intelligence. The presence of God and the Lamb, is the all-pervading medium of the joy and blessedness of Heaven. Its light is superior to the power and brightness of the sun. It illumines the Heavenly clime, and gilds every prospect from the Holy Hill of Zion, and imparts life and gladness to every inhabitant of the heavenly world. To bask in its uncreated and everlasting effulgence, is the earnest desire and expectation of every christian. This desire engrosses his heart. It is the centre, about which, his hope revolves. In the light of a prospect of becoming pure and holy, his hope brightens, glows and warms.

Now, such a hope, will exert a corresponding influence over the christian's life and character. It will beget the desire and excite the effort to become holy.

Therefore, under the influence of a genuine hope, he who possesses such a hope,

will bring his personal agency to co-operate with the tendency of his hope, in the purification of his heart and life.

“Faith, is the substance of things hoped for.”—But faith works by love and purifies the heart. Purity is an essential element of holiness. Angels are holy, because they are pure spirits. Heaven is pure, because its very atmosphere is holiness. Spirits of just men made perfect, who abide there, are pure, because they are holy.

The hope of the Christian, being a product of holiness, is itself, a source of holy emotion and influence which are strong and penetrating.

The Bible describes spiritual life, as a well or fountain of living water, which opens in the heart of the believer, as a gushing spring of life and blessedness. From the waters of this well of life, is formed the hope of the christian, which like a glorious bow, bends over the prospect beyond the grave. Hanging in the heavens above him, this hope powerfully attracts the soul in holy aspirations towards that bright and blessed abode where every breath is purity, and every breeze is love !

The hope of the Christian, shoots its ray across the dark valley and shadow of death into the scene of a future life, where it expands into a prospect, most enchanting and glorious. This is the land of Beulah, on the borders of which, Payson plumed his spirit for its eternal flight. Here, is the Canaan of the Christian's pilgrimage — where the "weary are to rest — and the wicked cease from troubling." Here is a scene of blessedness to be enjoyed by the Christian, because it is a place of holiness.

Here the burning seraph spreads its wing and chants its glad hosanna.

Here too is Jesus, — the mediator of the new covenant — sitting at the right hand of power — clothed in a vesture dipped in blood — who is the beating pulse of the blessedness of the Heavenly hosts ! Indeed, the high walls of precious stones, and the gates of massive pearls which enclose the celestial city, will forever shut out and exclude all impurity, "for there shall in no wise enter into it, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a

lie,—but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. 21, 37 v.

Now, to such an abode, the hope of the christian allures his feet.

It excites the soul, by awakening desires, which, like a raging thirst, burn in the soul and impel it to seek gratification by frequent draughts from the word of God and the rich fullness of his grace. Hence, a process of purification is conducted in the heart of the Christian, by the influence of his hope, directed by the spirit of God, whose work it is to render the Christian more pure and holy, till like a shock of corn, he has become fully ripe for the harvest.

Here, then, we have a test, by which the Christian may judge of his hope, whether it be true or false.

The effect of the influence of his hope, affords such a test. This influence will tell on the heart and life—operate in private, as well as in public—in the closet, as well as on the house top. It will leave its traces of purity on the thoughts and desires.

It will excite in the Christian, hungering and thirsting after righteousness—it will

dispose him to break away from evil habits of remaining sin, till one after another, their galling shackles shall be loosened and drop from the weary soul. It will aid him, in making new conquests over himself, his disposition, evil inclinations and desires.

With fear and trembling, he will watch and keep the garden of his own heart. He will watch with increasing solicitude, against the evil hour of temptation. He will love to pray in secret. He will admire and love the character of God with increasing fervor, and all, who bear the image of Jesus Christ.

His interest in the discharge of religious duties, will increase. He will esteem the privileges and opportunities of grace more precious.

He will receive the truth in the love of it, and hate and avoid error. He will love holiness for its own sake, and hate and avoid sin on account of its inherent turpitude.

Such are some of the marks by which a good hope traces its influence on the life and character of the Christian. By these marks, it may be definitely ascertained.

Thus the christian as endowed with hope,

is purified and perfected in proportion to which, his joy and blessedness are increased.

For the Christian's hope, beams with the dawning light of that future and more perfect state, where no storm beats — no cloud obscures the prospect. The Christian's hope is full of balm for the wounds of sin. Its consolations, "the world can neither give nor take away." Its sweet foretastes of Heaven, to the soul of the child of Jesus, are like the drops of dew, which fell in bread round about the encamped hosts of Israel in their journeyings through the wilderness to the promised land. Thus, as endowed with faith the Christian becomes possessed of righteousness; and as endowed with hope, he is allured into paths of peace and purity, till he is sanctified in the full enjoyment of the holiness and blessedness of the paradise of God.



CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO THE WORLD.

As related to, and connected with the glory of his Creator, man cannot live in vain. He dies not to himself. Living or dying man must so far subserve the end of creation, as to exhibit the benevolent principle on which Deity acted in putting forth creative power. This element in the divine character must have a development in all his works to the grand display of which, man, sensual, selfish, groveling man, must ultimately contribute, in his life and death, — “for none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself.”

In the fall of man from primordial innocence and virtue, the world passed into a state of revolt against God. He became a rebel, and lived in treason; and on this account, the favor of his Sovereign was forfeited, — while justice required the sacrifice of man to the honor of law, or the reconciliation of man with his God, as a subject of law.

The reconciliation of this world with its Maker, has ever been a prominent object with the court above. This was the main object of the mission of Jesus to earth. Having projected the scheme of grace, — which began its movements cotemporaneously with the fall, in the course of which the cross became the centre of action, — and having set in train of operation, a series of mighty agencies, and committed to the apostles and their successors, the ministry of reconciliation, and instituted a church, as the depository of means and agencies in reconciling man with his Maker, Christ ascended on high, to manage the interests of the great work above.

Now, it is in connexion with this scheme of things, the Christian is called to live and die in a world exposed to the casualties of sin, temptation and evil. Through this scheme, the Christian is related to the world and connected with its destiny.

The church, in its largest sense, is a body of Christian believers—men who have been reconciled with God, and washed and purified in the blood of his Son.

Christ is the head of this body. Christians

are the members and organs, which direct and concentrate the moral power lodged in the church, so as to make impression on the world.

This power has ever been aimed by Christianity, at the single object of turning men from sin unto holiness, and from the service of Satan unto God.

In the exercise of their peculiar and appropriate duties, Christians animate the church, which is the body of Christ.

The world lies in sin. Its children are sinners. Impenitence and perverseness, marshal them on the plains of time, as the armies of the aliens.

Though they often rush upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's power, the God with whom we have to do, being merciful, long suffering and of great forbearance—"not willing any should perish"—hushes the thunder of his wrath—bids justice stay its sword, till opportunity shall have been granted for repentance and reconciliation. While thus waiting to be gracious, God sends forth his spirit, and raises up in the midst, and from the very ranks of rebel men, "a new-born

race—a chosen generation—a peculiar people.” This people he makes use of in executing his gracious design of benevolence, by planting them around his ambassadors, to stay up their hands, and second their efforts, in the ministry of reconciliation.

The whole company of redeemed men belong to the embassy, and are appointed by God to live and die, (if need be,) in sustaining the institutions of religion and executing plans for the reconciliation of a world of perishing sinners. The ministers of the cross are the envoys extraordinary, but Christians belong to the same mission of peace and good will to man, which was heralded by a multitude of the Heavenly hosts, that hovered over the manger in Bethlehem, where the infant Savior lay.

While they live in it, Christians are citizens of the world ; and though they are but pilgrims and strangers on earth, they are connected to it by civil, social and domestic relations.

Thus, the Christian is connected with the world, and by the connexion, constitutes a centre of influence in the circle of social re-

lationship, which mingles with the tide of national character—which diffuses itself like leaven throughout the mass of society. On all within his circle, the Christian operates; and when the influence of several are combined, it silently affects the whole community, checks open vice, and swallows up out-breaking sin. Christian influence is the great conservative element in human society.

In his change from a state of nature to a state of grace, God uses the Christian, by turning his life to his service and glory.

In the conversion of Paul, was seen the hand of Almighty God; and in every case of the conversion of a sinner from the error of his ways, God is present and has a direct agency. The change through all its stages, is usually marked with the traces of a divine agency.

It is wrought, "neither by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord." Moreover, the hopes and the fears, the joys and the sorrows, which spring out of this change, present the Christian in perfect contrast with his former self, and the associates of his carnal state. Now, while the world,

with scoffs and scorn, beholds these things, though it turns aside with a leer, yet it is moved with wonder,—it is affected ; and the tendency of the effect, is, to draw it out after God.

Moreover, in the change from a state of nature to a state of grace, the Christian becomes invested with a character, from which spring new and peculiar relations.

The distinguishing feature of this character, is, *a god-likeness of disposition*. This is a gracious disposition ; and is the source of direct agency and effort, in the reconciliation of man with his Maker. The Christian's relations and character, are such, that they can be fulfilled, only, by such a course of life and conduct, as that he shall “live *not unto himself* ;” for the boundary between the regenerate and unregenerate states, is a deep, permanent principle of benevolent desire, developed in a corresponding course of benevolent, disinterested action.

The Christian is endowed with new and peculiar power, by which, “as a Prince, he hath power with God and prevails.” It was so with Jacob. With the humble follower

of Jesus, prayer is a most potent engine, by which, he directly reaches, takes hold of and affects the interests of the world. Through prayer, as an instrumentality, the Christian can move that hand, which holds the world in its grasp—whose finger marks out the path of every event, and directs the energy of every cause. Though a simple, neglected and often despised means of good—though stript of its power and importance by the vain philosophy of some, nevertheless, prayer as a cause in the relation of events, is the channel of influences which are bearing the world onward to its destiny !

How often has a praying wife been the means of saving an ungodly husband ! how often have praying mothers prevailed with God in behalf of absent children ! how often has spiritual life kindled afresh and spread through the community, warming to newness of life, those dead in trespasses and sins, in answer to the fervid aspirations of some humble, perhaps obscure child of God !

As connected with the embassy God has sent to earth, all true Christians are expected to be direct, in their efforts to reconcile

man with his Maker. The Christian is raised up and stationed among men, to propose and urge the necessity of reconciliation, for which, by overtures of mercy, God has prepared the way.

Singly, or associated in church estate and relationship, Christians are expected to sustain and execute plans, for the recovery of their friends and fellow men from the power and dominion of sin. In this respect they are co-workers with God.

By making exhibition of the fruits of reconciliation in their lives and death, God uses his children, in carrying forward the work of reconciliation.

The Christian is a pardoned sinner. Rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, he is a living example of the blessedness of reconciliation. "To him who loves God, all things work together for good."

Temptations, crosses, afflictions—all, like joyous rills, are so turned as to flow together, (if not in comfort here on earth) yet so as to mingle and swell that ocean of blessedness and purity, where the spirits of just men made perfect, shall bathe forever!

The Holy Scriptures, though sealed to other eyes, to those of the reconciled in God, discover inexhaustible treasures of consolation.

Jesus, now and then, opens the very windows of Heaven, to afford a glimpse of that rest, which remains for the people of God; and from its rich fullness, sheds down a few mercy drops as a foretaste, letting in upon the soul, a ray of his own burning love, to fire its zeal and kindle its devotion.

And if a cloud is suffered to sweep over the prospect of the reconciled soul, it is only that the light may break forth in brighter effulgence—that in the cloud, the bow of promise may appear. But when the wintry chill of death sweeps over the scene, it brings the Christian's harvest day, when the choicest fruits of reconciliation, will be reaped.—Though the soul be folded in the arms of death, it experiences an embrace of love. A shout of triumph trembles on the tongue as the spirit breaks away from the thrall of sense and flesh, and soars to meet its God! “O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!”

There is a precious reality in the power of the religion of the cross, which can be fully realized, and which is exhibited in its wonderful displays, only, in the death scene of the real christian.

There is a charm in atoneing blood, which holds the king of terrors spell-bound, till the soul of the departing saint has safely crossed the dark valley and shadow of death — that abyss which divides the spirit land from ours !

Thus, is the Christian connected with the interests, and called to live and die in a world of sin and wo. In the manifestation of covenanting mercy and grace, by direct effort, by the power of prayer, by an exhibition in his own life and death, of the fruits of reconciliation, God calls the Christian into his service here on earth. He is a living epistle, in which may be read, the merciful and benovolent disposition of God towards his creatures. A real Christian, is a real blessing to the world. His influence purifies and perfects society. He lives and labors, and dies for others. He is a living, moving, speaking example of the mercy and grace of God. The Christian is called to glorify

God, by affording in his life and death-scene, an exhibition of the fruits of reconciliation. He dies not for himself, but for the interests of the great work of reconciliation, on which the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are engaged. —he dies for the truth. Huss, Rogers, Cranmer and Gridley, in the flames at the stake, died not for themselves. The fires that kindled their funeral piles, lighted also a volcano, which has shook the very walls of the popedom, and poured a flood of light and truth, over continents and kingdoms. Its mighty throbbings are yet felt at Rome, in Italy and among the islands of the sea, and wherever the pulse of truth can beat !

Martyn, Not, and Harriet Newell, together with the whole company of the heralds of the cross, whose bones bleach on foreign shores, died not for themselves. “For none of us liveth unto himself; and no man dieth unto himself.”—Rom. xiv: 7.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONQUEST.

THE gladiator, it is said, met his foe in deadly combat on the arena of a vast amphitheatre, in the presence of the congregated citizens of Rome. So the christian has been summoned to a conflict, for which, he stands girded, in the midst of a vast amphitheatre — a spectacle to angels, men and devils. This world is the arena of his spiritual strife.

By the same dark and perilous route, the great captain of our salvation, as a pioneer, in opening — fought — bled and triumphed, — the disciple of Christ — the Christian, must pass to his rest on high.

In the flesh, he must meet the foes of his master ; — run like risques ; — and engage in the same perilous conflict, and achieve a like victory. Then, he will be entitled to the rewards and honors of a conqueror — and crowned as a hero.

The course of the Christian is a warfare, in which he wrestles, not against flesh and blood — “but against principalities and powers — against the rulers of this world — and against spiritual wickedness in high places. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God. The end of his warfare will be victory — a triumph — the fruits of a conquest.

In this conquest, the Christian must meet in conflict and overcome, the world — the devil and himself.

The devil is described as a fierce, malignant spirit — of great subtlety and power — and of real and not fictitious existence. The world is the Province of his usurped dominion; for he is said to be the “Prince and power of the air — the Prince of this world.”

“We have the strongest reason,” says the author of the *Physical Theory of Another Life* — “for believing that men universally and in every age, are exposed to silent malignant seductions, which indeed, never trench upon natural liberty of mind; which, too often, like the influence of profligate

companions, prevail over the better principles of our nature."

Such, is the nature of the power of dark and fallen spirits, over mankind.

But a direct agency is attributed to Satan, as the instigator and abettor of the acts of wicked men—"the children of disobedience," as they are called.

Therefore, the Devil is the patron of wickedness; in which he delights, and which he encourages. All this is implied in those words of inspiration, which speak of him, "as the Prince and power of the air, who worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience."

Evil-doers, are then, the willing tools of the Devil. He contrives, plans, and suggests; while they, at his instigation, execute his diabolical purposes.

Insatiable destructiveness, is another feature of his character, as sketched in the Bible. "He goeth about, as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. 5: 9 v.

The fact of the real existence of such a being, though invisible, who frequents the

path of human life, to beguile and destroy, is as clearly revealed, as any fact in the Bible. Christ had sensible demonstration of it. The world groans under it; and all in the world, are exposed to the power of the arch-apostate.

Christians are a "peculiar people," — and therefore, objects of the fierce wrath and implacable hatred of the Devil.

Once his slave and tool — as all the children of disobedience are, — in his change of character, the Christian changed masters, and revolted against the authority of the Devil.

The Christian is a follower of Jesus, a soldier of the cross, a candidate for a celestial crown and throne, and receives the countenance and support of the great Captain of our salvation, — who has vanquished the Devil — chained him to the car of providence, and compels him to drag onward to its glorious consummation, the scheme of grace. The Devil seeks the everlasting ruin of the saints, because they are destined to rival himself, in glory and exaltation. He would defeat God, in any purpose he may

have, to elevate redeemed men to the vacant seats, once occupied by the Devil and his angels:—so that in Heaven, redeemed men may not become kings and priests unto God—noblemen in the celestial empire.

In attempting to execute this design, the Devil avails himself of temptation, which he plies under its various forms. The circumstances of life, society and companions—associates and friends — furnish ample resources.

And if the Devil fails in the means temptation furnishes, then he changes his method of operation. He is a being of great versatility. He can become, in appearance well disguised, an angel of light, when by such a change, he can more successfully prosecute his designs.

Artful and insidious, with all the skill of the old serpent who lurked in the garden of Eden—the Devil sometimes approaches the Christian, opening before him a way that seemeth right in his own eyes, that he may more effectually lead him down to the gates of death. “For there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Prov. 14:12 v.

It is not impossible, that providential occurrences, may be bent in the direction of his purposes, so that in following them as indications of the path of duty, the Christian, may be deceived and led astray thereby. Suggestion and impulse, are often effectually turned to his advantage, in accomplishing the same design.

Peculiar moral and mental infirmities, are seized upon, and brought to bear against the Christian — so that his steadfastness is often shaken — his rampart of faith broken down — his conscience paralyzed — while he himself, is hurried into sin.

By gusts of passion, the Devil often sweeps away the barriers of religious restraint — dashes to the ground, every good resolution — and precipitates the Christian into sin.

Envy, jealousy and malice, are sparks in the remaining depravity of the heart, which he contrives to fan into a flame. Thus does the Devil, at every corner of life, beset the Christian, that he may ensnare and captivate the soul. The godly in all ages have experienced the buffetings of Satan. They have escaped through much tribulation, and

by firm resistance. Every Christian may expect to meet the Devil in the warfare of faith, and must achieve a victory over him, would he gain the Christian conquest. "Resist the Devil and he will flee from thee"—"watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Watchfulness and prayer are safeguards against temptation; while resistance, will defeat the Devil in his attempts to overcome the soul.

But, though the Christian be successful in the first encounter, and overcome his foremost enemy, there is danger still, to his soul, from the world in which he lives.

Attractive, but delusive, the world is a scene of enchantment, often, too powerful for the heart of the Christian.

"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life"—are the sources of the world's power, over the heart of the Christian.

Worldly-mindedness, is one of the most prevailing and yet pernicious defects of Christian character. The world absorbs in its own, every other interest. Let the Christian become so blind to his real interest, as to feel that his treasure is on earth, and he

will dig for it here, till he has dug the grave of his soul ! “For he who will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God.”—James iv : 4. The motives of the gospel, fall powerless at the feet of the worldly-minded Christian. As he hastens through life, his eye will be diverted from life's great end. The phantoms of earth, as they flit by, will attract him : and as he turns aside to gaze, or mingles with the giddy throng of worldlings in the doubtful chase, he will stumble and fall into sin, if not into hell. Over the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches, multitudes have pitched into outer darkness. When the world rolls a bauble of fashion, or honor in his way, the worldling will stop to admire, and then stoop to pick it up. Pleasure beckons to her bowers, and he is won by the address of the world to receive her embrace, which ends in disappointment and remorse. How many strong men armed, have fallen thus, under the craft of the world ? How many, who would have braved legions of darkness, in open, undisguised conflict, and successfully maintained the fight, have been vanquished by a smile ?

The embrace of the world, is death to the Christian ; for the world never caresses, but to conquer. Then, the Christian must overcome the world, since his safety, lies in his victory here. And this is the victory that overcometh the world—"even your faith." Let the Christian live by faith, and he will overcome the world ; for he will live above the fear of its power, and below its flattery. Let him repudiate the selfish maxims of the world—resist its enchantments, and use the world as not abusing it, keeping himself unspotted therefrom—and whether the world go fair or foul with him, he will maintain a consistent walk and conversation. In fine, the Christian must meet and conquer himself.

Alexander the great, conquered the world, —could weep, it is said, because other worlds were not within reach of his sword. But, Alexander could not conquer himself. He was master on every other field, but that, in which he encountered self.

Naturally, self was not more invincible to the king of Macèdon, than it is to the humblest peasant on the mountain, or in the vale.

Knowledge is the ground of successful action. Knowledge of the circumstances and position of the enemy, enables the general, to secure victory. Self-knowledge, is the first step to self-conquest.

Such knowledge, implies acquaintance with personal infirmities — those vulnerable points in character, at which the shafts of sin, enter and wound, and destroy.

Though the heart be renewed, “the motions of sin remain in our mortal members.” All have their besetting sins, dear as a right hand, or as a right eye ; and various, as the seeds of human depravity, from which they spring. Though different in different individuals, besetting sins will appear under the form of passion, envy, lust and pride. These sins, like the little foxes which spoiled the vines, have spoiled many a Christian character, and blighted the graces which are the natural fruits of Christian principle. Open and flagitious wrong doing, is generally guarded against ; while little sins and vices, which can hide in the dark corners of the heart, or lurk under the motives, or bury in the desires, are suffered to escape as infirmities.

But these little sins, are the canker worms, at the root of piety. They cause blight to fall on the fruits of virtue. They must be hunted down and destroyed, or, overcome. Self is dear, but dangerous. The Christian, must not only watch against sin, but strive for the mastery of himself. He who holds with a firm grasp, the rein of every passion—he who can check appetite and suppress unholy desire, hath rule over his own spirit—has conquered himself.

So far as the development of disposition and character are concerned, “man is a bundle of habits.” But habits are the natural shoots of the heart, or, like exotics, they have been transplanted from the circle of society in which we move, and become ingrafted on ourselves. In the conflict for self conquest, the power of habit is to be overcome, so far, as to be subject to the control of himself. But such ascendancy over the appetites and passions and habits, can be acquired, only, by rigid and persevering discipline and self-denial. Then the Christian must practise habits of self-denial, and establish habits of self scrutiny.

The disposition, the motives, the desires and feelings, must be compelled, often, to pass in review before the bar of conscience. Now, such are the foes with which the Christian must grapple in fierce conflict. The present is a state of discipline. By the discipline of this state, evil habits are to be broken up, and evil dispositions are to be overcome. Besetting sins are to be subdued.

The Devil, the world and ourselves, are to be conquered. The whole man, is to be brought into subjection to the religious principle.

When all this has been thoroughly accomplished, the Christian will have overcome. His conquest will be complete. Then will he present an illustrious example of the nature and effects, of the religion of Jesus. Such is the warfare, in which, the Christian is engaged. Let him push for the conquest, and he will be permitted to enter the celestial city in triumphal state, bearing the trophies of victory. Victory or death, is inevitable ! There is no release, there is no alternative !

Till he has fought and conquered, there is no safety. Let him not be found sleeping at his post. His foes are within, and around

him. He can never lay off his armor. The conflict is between wisdom and folly—the spiritual and the sensual man.

The last enemy with which the Christian must grapple is death. He must meet, but will overcome, the king of terrors. The triumph of death over the physical nature, will be but a prelude to the Christian's complete victory.

For, death will triumph, only, over the sensual man, while the spiritual, will be released and suffered to pass out of this world, beyond the reach of every spiritual foe, into the saint's everlasting rest. There, will he be permitted to wear a victor's crown—a bloodless trophy, which God the righteous judge shall give to all who love his appearing. There is an adaptation of means to the end, in the course of discipline to which the Christian is subjected, though God giveth to the Christian his victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, by which, the Devil, the world and himself, are chained to the will of the conqueror, and led as his captives. They can no more entice the heart, and lead into sin.

The result of this conflict, is, to purify and

perfect character. The moral power brought into exercise, for resistance against evil, strengthens the moral constitution; and the effect of temptation resisted successfully, strengthens the moral nature, in well developed power and habit. The moral energy brought into exercise for resistance, develops the higher and nobler nature of man. It also generates habit, and plants principles, which will ultimately control the being. The habits being virtuous, and the principles being those of holy benevolence and obedience, peace, blessedness, life everlasting, will be the rich reward. He who passes into a future state, from his present inferior condition — from time into eternity — furnished with such habits and principles by the discipline of life, is prepared to enjoy the Christian's reward, as the hero of a spiritual warfare.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIAN'S STATE OF GLORIFICATION.

WE have seen the Christian on earth — exposed to its evil — flying from the “wrath to come” — encountering temptation — contending with and triumphing over sin. But, having fought the good fight — finished his course and kept the faith — he will be permitted to enter into his rest — a rest which remaineth to the people of God — “a rest that shall be glorious.”

On earth — among its inhabitants — the Christian was distinguished as belonging to a peculiar people. In heaven, he will be no less distinguished, in the same particular. He will appear there, “with a great multitude which no man can number,” who surround the throne of God and the Lamb, and cease not day, nor night, saying “holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

In personal appearance, the Christian will be distinguished in his glorified state.

He will walk among the inhabitants of Heaven — robed in white — wearing a crown, and bearing the emblems of victory in his hands. His robe of linen, clean and white, “is the righteousness of the saints.” But, the righteousness of the saints, is the righteousness of God in Christ, with which redeemed men are clothed. It is a royal vesture. It is of the same material with Christ’s. Then the Christian in his glorified state, will be dressed like Christ. He will be crowned with a crown of life, fashioned like Christ’s crown — studded with symbols of life — beaming with its glory. He will be distinguished among the heavenly hosts as a hero — a conqueror — even as Christ — the great captain of our salvation, is there distinguished.

Each Christian, will bear there the image of Christ, which, on earth, was formed in his heart the hope of glory.

Whatever regal honor, whatever glory as a conqueror — whatever admiration as a moral hero — Christ shall receive at the hands and

lips of celestial beings, and the pure intelligences of the universe of God who may gather there from all worlds — the Christian, will be permitted to share,— if we may believe the word of God. Indeed—the resurrection body of the Christian, is to be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, however marred, it may here seem — however deformed, it may be here, in the flesh. So the Christian, in heaven, will be distinguished in his person — in his appearance — in his vesture, and in his character — by a close and striking resemblance to Christ. In this respect, he will appear there, as belonging to a peculiar people.

He will be equally distinguished, for the service, to which he will be called there.

The place of service will be peculiar. He will serve in the inner court — where God dwelleth. Angels, like flames of fire stand and serve round about the throne, as ministers of state. But the Christian is called to the estate of "Kings and Priests unto God." He will be honored in heaven with mysterious revelations of the presence of God in

the deep fullness of his glory — in the secret place of the Most High.

The Christian will lead the service of God in his celestial Temple. To this end, he is made a Priest unto God. The object of this service, would seem to be, an increase of celestial harmony. Christian spirits — redeemed, blood-washed, will fill the orchestra above — lead the heavenly choirs, and teach them to hymn their Maker's praise in a song which will be new, even among those sweet sounds which warble from immortal tongues, or flow from the voice of harpers harping with their harps !

The burden of this song will be more strange than the song itself. Salvation is its theme. Those who sing it, having experienced its power and drank of the fullness of its blessedness, are able to sing it with the spirit and understanding also.

Therefore, Christian spirits in heaven can touch chords of sympathy — awaken emotions — and reach strains so exalted, as will transcend the power and skill of every other heavenly songster.

When the Christian with his blood-washed

companions, shall strike this new song, we may suppose that angels will pause to catch the thrilling strain — the heavenly inhabitants cease their pastimes on the banks of the river of life, and listen with rapture to the strange enchanting sounds — and that cherub and seraph will climb celestial heights — drop their golden harps and suspend their hallelujahs to hear.

But when the song is ended, and the echoes of it begin to die along the heavenly plain — its power, will move even the heavenly hosts, who, rising round about the throne, and falling on their faces, will worship God — and in one long, loud, and rapturous chorus unite, saying — “Amen — blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and forever — Amen !” So the Christian, in heaven, will lead the song, in the chorus of which only, will high and holy intelligences be able to join.

The Christian in his glorified state will be an object of peculiar interest. God Almighty will take special notice of him, and receive him, into a special and peculiar nearness

to himself. The Lord God will dwell with him. No tear can start, but he will see, and stoop to wipe it away. No sorrow can invade his peace. God will watch over Christian spirits, to comfort them. They will be removed in all respects, from all those causes of sorrow and suffering, which marred their peace on earth. The glorified state of the Christian, in fine, will be in perfect contrast with his present state.

Something analogous to this description, is shadowed through the gorgeous imagery of the book of Revelations.

Let the Christian contemplate the miniature of the Christian's life, till the features shall be indelibly impressed on his own soul,—till he shall see himself, as he hopes to appear in Heaven—transformed into the likeness of Christ.

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